

Minutes
State Board of Education Study Session
Thursday, April 21, 2005

The Arizona State Board of Education held a Special Study Session at the Arizona Department of Education, 1535 West Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007. The meeting was called to order at 1:35PM.

Members Present

Mr. Jesse Ary
Ms. Nadine Mathis Basha
Dr. Matthew Diethelm
Ms. JoAnne Hilde
Superintendent Tom Horne
Ms. Joanne Kramer
Ms. Anita Mendoza
Dr. Karen Nicodemus
Ms. Cecilia Owen
Dr. John Pedicone

Members Absent

Dr. Michael Crow

Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence

1. Presentation and Discussion Regarding Results of the High School AIMS Study.

Presentation Will Include AIMS Performance Data Disaggregated by Various Subgroups
Drs. Jerome D'Agostino, Associate Professor, University of Arizona, and David Garcia, Assistant Professor, Arizona State University presented information via PowerPoint Presentation regarding where Arizona is now on AIMS. (Please see presentation in materials packet)

Dr. Garcia pointed out the following factors:

- Sub-group analysis of characteristics of students, self-reported
 - Look at relationship between passage rates and student demographics
- This study/presentation focused on Mathematics and is based on student counts from Spring '04 to Fall '04
- Looked at two years of AIMS data which provided a limited set of variables
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Mobility
 - Special Education/Disability status
 - Language
 - Vocational Education
 - Gifted
 - Title I
- Race/ethnicity of cohort, self-reported by students
 - 53% white
 - 5% black
 - 33% Hispanic
 - 6% Native American
 - 3% Asian
 - > 1% Other
- 50% went from “approaches” to “meets” or “exceeds”
 - Not large disparities by race ethnicity group for the group of students that were in “approaches” that moved in to “meets” or “exceeds”

- About 7% went from “falls far below” to “meets” or “exceeds” statewide
- Most common progression is for students in the “approaches” category to move into either “meets” or “exceeds”
- There was a lot of instruction in school in the Fall to assist students in the areas where they had tested low
 - This speaks for the stability of the test
- 70% of students that scored in “falls far below” in Spring 2004 remained in “falls far below” after taking the assessment in Fall 2004
 - This group is more difficult to educate, has further to go and did not make the same type of progress as students that were already in “approaches”
 - This group represents approximately 25% of the student population
- Cohort attrition continues to complicate the analysis of the effect of the AIMS policies over time
- Most are minority students that after the first two administrations after Spring were in “falls far below”
- did not see significant movement in students more likely to move from “approaches” to “meets” or “exceeds”
- Majority of students remaining in “falls far below” in Fall 2004 are minority students

Facilitated by Dr. Stanley Rabinowitz, members’ continued discussion raised the following points:

- Analysis was done of the minority rates for highly concentrated minority school versus non- as a proxy and there were differences between the passage rates of highly concentrated minority schools
 - considerably lower than those schools that did not have a highly concentrated population of minority students
- There is not a clear understanding of how to close the achievement gap, as is also the case in the other 25 states that have far more experience than Arizona
- No data indicates that states with graduation testing have higher drop-out rates than those that do not
- What kinds of programs are appropriate for student preparation?
 - Tutoring?
 - Focused end-of-program approach?
 - Increased remediation?
 - Beginning at 8th grade or earlier?
 - Systemic change at the beginning level of education?
- State statute refers to state competency tests and R7-2-302 states that the Board has determined that AIMS is the competency for the class of 2006
 - The State Board will also determine the cut scores based on objective analysis
- Every State Board has the responsibility for setting the passing scores based on
 - Content decisions made by teachers
 - Technical decisions considering the standard error of measure
 - Impact data – what is an acceptable passing and failing rate
- Important that children come to school physically prepared to take the tests
 - Rested and fed
 - Attitudinal changes
 - Utilize tutoring funds to get these changes?
- Students that failed in another state went into another class the next semester like arts that

- had math, etc., infused into the curriculum
- Need alternative paths to demonstrate competency
 - Can move forward and perhaps introduce pilot programs
 - Bridge process for class of '06
- Respect for the statistics but no confidence in the AIMS test; need level of security
- Shortest timeframe for new rulemaking is six months; emergency rules can be drafted in a shorter timeframe
- Students that failed AIMS last Spring, took AIMS classes in Fall after school, failed AIMS again, then took tutoring and now are trying to take classes to graduate by December '05 to avoid the AIMS Spring '06 requirement which is also being suggested by some schools
- State Board needs leadership on AIMS as all alternative paths are not equal in terms of effective strategies
- Kids need to be ready at the beginning of their school experience
- Alternative paths analyses can be provided for the State Board but there is no substitute for good instruction
- Keep focused on right problem. Doing away with the test does not educate a student better
 - Issue is what the student knows when they leave the K-12 system and go into the real world
- Tutoring fund was a waste of money; process not effective, structured or targeted
- Need to understand ethically how to make right decision
- How to use impact data
 - Is this the ultimate standard or is this the '06 standard?
 - Want it to be higher or lower or this is as good as we can do
 - If we want 70% in '08, then we need 68% in '06
 - How many steps does it take to get there?
 - Smell test – what will the public think?
 - If defending the cut score consider
 - How many can/should pass
 - How do we get there
 - Can I defend this publicly
- Too often the State Board is faced with a desperate move and protecting the integrity of accountability
- Need to prepare early for upcoming decisions
- Some of the other 25 states are utilizing approaches via legislation, to establish a cut score and final score, or via the rulemaking process
- The Superintendent has put \$4M into arts programs as statistics show that students in the arts do better academically
- Can a different cut score be set for each content area?
 - A clear message has not been sent as to which classes are required to pass the test
- Different passing scores/SEM's can be set for each area around impact data
- SEM gives a window of 10-15 points to make adjustments
- Results of the last study were distributed to House and Senate leadership, all members of the Education Committees and the Governor's Office
 - Discussions are in progress regarding a compromise
 - Attempts to modify AIMS is stalled in Legislature
 - Unknown when results will be released

2. Presentation, Discussion and Consideration of the Board's Schedule for AIMS Standards Setting

Mr. Yanez

Mr. Vince Yanez, Executive Director, Arizona State Board of Education, noted that the State Board was scheduled to consider the Department's recommendations regarding setting the cut scores on May 11, 2005. Mr. Yanez noted that the Standards Setting Committee would have recommendations prepared for the State Board's consideration on May 10 and on May 11 the Board would meet to make those determinations. Mr. Yanez reported that after the last meeting it became apparent that the Standards Setting Committee would not finish its work until approximately 6PM on May 11 and the Board was requested to meet at that time to consider those recommendations. Mr. Yanez stated his concern about asking the Board to consider those recommendations with no notice. After conversing with Board leadership and Department staff, Mr. Yanez reported that this may not be enough time for the Board to receive information and give it thoughtful consideration. Consequently, the effect of using one extra day was considered should the Board need additional time to consider the test scores. Mr. Yanez stated that there would be some impact but that it would not be extremely significant and this is what prompted the notice of a meeting on May 12, 2005.

Dr. Diethelm reiterated that the Board will need time to immerse themselves in the facts and that the longer it takes to make the decisions, the longer the delay will be for getting the results to the schools.

State Board members comments included:

Mr. Ary:

- Better to wait and see what transpires and then will have some feeling as to whether or not there needs to be a time extension;
- No great desire to receive a batch of information at 6PM with the heavy decision due a few hours later;
- Longer time to make an analysis would be a better alternative;
- Available on May 11 and May 12.

Ms. Mendoza:

- Understand importance in getting information in a timely manner;
- Most uncomfortable about possible legislative action regarding high school graduation cut off points;
- Like opportunity to have as much time as necessary to reach a decision;
- Will try to be at all meetings scheduled as there are school graduation schedules to consider;
- Anxious to see today's presentation.

Dr. Nicodemus:

- How is information conveyed to districts?

Mr. Stephen Mesmer, Vice President of Programs, CTB/McGraw-Hill, responded that the final reports are sent via overnight delivery. Mr. Mesmer noted there is not a one-to-one correlation in that if the State Board delays its decision by one day, the results will be available June 3 and DPA will be available between June 8 and June 10.

Superintendent Horne noted that the \$4M balance from the \$10M Tutoring Fund needs to be contracted by June 30. Schools are expecting test results before that date so they can schedule tutoring.

- Prefer to have additional time to look at results;
- Responsible to do diligence;
- Has scheduling conflicts with community college graduation, community college

governing board meeting, etc.;

- Looking for a compromise in schedules and try not to delay results to schools any more than is necessary;

Mr. Mesmer reported that May 16 would translate the high school results on June 10 and DPA to June 20 with other program implications that would be affected downstream regarding the Fall and Spring test administrations. Mr. Mesmer noted the impact would be long term and would include cost implications.

- Two-day delay by the State Board causes a 7-day delay at CTB? Why?
- Most students will complete the academic year by June 27 so a June delivery date is post the students still being in the classroom;

Dr. Pedicone:

- Concerned about the process the Board will engage in to get close to making these decisions;
- This case defies the principles previously discussed as to how this Board is going to act;
- Recognizing the implications of this decision, was not aware of the short timeframe and the sense of desperation that is going to take place;
- Faced with making decisions in just a few hours that have broad-based impact;
- Thought the results were going to be given to the Board on May 10 and then make the decision by May 12;
- No indictment to the hard work done by staff;
- Got an email changing the date and has scheduling conflicts that can't be changed;
- Need to be at this process;
- How did we get to the point of having the meeting date changed without member input;
- Decision with such broad-based impact can't be made in a short timeframe;
 - the Board can't afford to make this kind of decision;
- If '06 high stakes piece is mitigated, then a shorter timeframe with a chance to analyze the impact may make sense;
- By the end of today hope to look at a process that makes this less difficult and work within the May 12 timeframe with some members absent; otherwise May 16 is next available date.

Superintendent Horne:

- Presented with a dilemma that was clear for a long time, which is the promise to get results to the schools in 30 days;
- Insufficient consideration was given at the time of the promise since standards setting was also to be done;
- When the conflict became clear, staff and CTB have put a very tight schedule together;
- CTB has gone beyond expectations with extra personnel and machine time to meet deadlines;
- Other states have a longer turn-around time;
- Recommend meeting May 11 or May 12 in an attempt to get work done;
 - If work can't be completed, can continue on the following Monday;
- Impact on schools is significant since they need access to tutoring funds;

Ms. Hilde:

- Believe standards setting process has been laid out logically but that is not the issue;
- Never told that the Board would meet on the 11th after the standards setting process was completed, about 6:00PM, with the recommendation that the State Board would meet at 6PM;

- Do not vote on an issue without reading, asking questions, and having a thorough knowledge of an issue;
 - This is the very least the field can expect of the State Board members;
- Have reserved May 9-12 and part of May 16 for this process;
- Was promised to never be put in this kind of situation;
 - it is too difficult;
- Have to have information for at least 12 hours;
- Need to know questions can be answered;
- Preference is May 16;
- Need ability to make informed decision to the best of my ability.

Ms. Kramer:

- Plan to attend at least one day of standard setting;
- Not aware of the short amount of time to make this decision;
- Need more time;
- Long drive cuts into available time to meet and process.

Ms. Owen:

- Appreciate hard work and 30-day turn-around goal;
- Agree that time is needed to make decisions;
- Will participate to the best of my ability;
- Concerned regarding the lack of structure for the tutoring fund moneys;
- If some consensus is reached today, perhaps more dates/times can be arranged.

Dr. Pedicone:

- Talked with 12 Superintendents in Pima County yesterday and they would rather postpone results rather than make a hasty decision without do diligence;
- Board needs to be clear on issues before making decisions;
- More time, discussion and clarity are needed to make these critical decisions.

Dr. Diethelm:

- Appreciate input;
- Will work up 2-3 alternatives with Mr. Yanez and Superintendent Horne, mapped around members' input, to be discussed and determined at the April 25, 2005 State Board meeting;

Dr. Nicodemus:

- Can tutoring services continue into July still being paid from '05 funds?

Superintendent Horne:

- Can continue for 12 months but must be contracted by June 30, 2005.

Ms. Mendoza:

- Felt tutoring was not very structured, i.e. difficult to find qualified people, clarification of definition of highly qualified;
- Need to hear what improvements have been made after the first round of tutoring.

Superintendent Horne:

- Board will have the opportunity to re-set the criteria for contractual arrangements to be entered into in June;
- Some changes are being planned and more suggestions will be taken from the Board.

Dr. Diethelm:

- If the tutoring fund was a Legislature-sponsored formal intervention program, the Board could oversee the program and see that improvements in Arizona's education are accomplished.

3. Presentation and Discussion of Issues Relating to AIMS. The Board May Consider the Formulation of a Policy Framework Regarding AIMS

Dr. Stanley Rabinowitz, Director, Assessment & Standards Development Services, WestEd, reminded members that they are working on big-picture, broad, and hopefully consensus issues that the Board can agree upon in moving ahead over the next year with AIMS. He noted that this is a pivotal time and it is very important that the Board speak as one voice on the issues.

Dr. Rabinowitz noted that his role in today's meeting includes:

- Clearing up any technical policy or other issues the Board is still not sure about;
- Giving background information and answering questions;

Background information presented by Dr. Rabinowitz:

- About 25 states have graduation testing or will have, with an NCLB agenda
 - Nevada for over 20 years
 - California has an '06 deadline
- Tenth or eleventh grade administered test in reading, writing, math and a combination of reading/writing/English language arts used for graduation
 - Standards are basically at the 8th grade level, with the test being administered at the 10th or 11th grade
- No states have an end-of-course exam as a graduation test
- Several states also have a certificate of completion in addition
- 45 of the 50 states have broad standards; 5 say they have and are moving toward power standards but they are not
- Favor sufficient focus that covers range of what is considered as important
- Can never have enough time to do sufficient diagnosis that will enable teachers to go in the next day and figure out what to do for a student tomorrow and the next day
- Goal of these tests is to identify those students needing remedial and other methods to focus on deficits
- Tests serve as school, classroom and student accountability;
 - Are summative;
 - Point in the right direction; identify the relative strengths/weaknesses
 - Takes 2-4 years for schools to implement changes warranted by test results
- Predominant alternative path in these 25 states is for students with disabilities
 - Very few (less than 5) have alternative path for all students
 - Standards are equally rigorous across the states but the ones selected to be on the graduation tests vary
 - AIMS is in the top half of rigor and not to be confused with an 8th grade test
 - No correlation between passing and funding
- There is a lot of push-back now regarding NCLB
 - NCLB does not require a graduation test but requires high school testing around the broad content standards
 - Does not require a high stakes decision at the student level
 - Does not require withholding diplomas or promotions
 - A.R.S. § 15-701.01 (3) requires the State Board to develop competency tests in reading, writing and mathematics
 - States have varying degrees of success and controversy with their graduation testing
 - Passing rate
 - There is no absolute standard for what is necessary to do
 - Instructional Standards

- Technical Standards
 - Legal Standards
- Every state is struggling with ELL, minority, and special education students
 - No state has solved the achievement gap or has developed a true alternative to the single test that meets technical standards of rigor
 - Alternatives have been incorporated to avoid lawsuits
 - Believe the purpose of most states is to identify what students have those gaps and not to diagnose those gaps
- A valid graduation test identifies the students appropriately who have not met the standard and then puts into place a series of remediation steps
- No definitive data between intervention and retention
- Minimum instructional, technical and legal requirements to justify high stakes accountability for students
 - Correct content standards
 - Purpose of test is not to see if the student knows everything we ever want them to know
 - Dr. Garcia will point out that the content of AIMS is attainable
 - Correct performance standards (cut scores)
 - Sufficient due notice given to prepare students and teachers for required work
 - Standard in most states is 2-4 years

Superintendent Horne:

- Reporting results promptly and by concept of the standards is a substantive step toward helping diagnostics as well as the summative part of the test

Dr. Rabinowitz:

- It's a nice first step

Dr. Diethelm:

- AIMS exams we use are summative and the data can be disaggregated to give directions both in the classroom and for the individual
- When you want to do specific diagnosis and improved training you have to get into formative assessment and tools and teacher development that can be used every day in the classroom

Ms. Owen:

- Not building capacity in the systems for teachers to do what the prescription is
- Tutoring funds are not a systemic solution to resolve the test results

Dr. Rabinowitz:

- Tutoring is focused approach to deal with immediate problem
- Next step is up to the Board to get more pro-active assistance to the teachers and students

4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Dr. Ildi Laczko-Kerr, Scottsdale Unified School District, stated that school districts need clarification about Arizona Department of Education's interpretation of the Attorney General's opinion regarding the graduation requirements of special education students. Dr. Laczko-Kerr noted that districts are receiving conflicting guidance from the Department and there is a need to understand the difference between graduation and accountability requirements and that schools may not meet AYP based on the State Board of Education AIMS score requirement. Dr. Laczko-Kerr implored the State Board to direct Department staff to provide consistent, written communication to districts regarding their requirement for IEPs with regard to their graduation requirement.

Superintendent Horne responded that if inconsistent information is received, questions should be directed to him and he will request clarification from the Attorney General's Office.

Dr. Laczko-Kerr responded that the problem lies in the interpretation that the Department has made with regard to the Attorney General's opinion.

Superintendent Horne reiterated the Attorney General's opinion that stated it is up to the district to set graduation requirements for special education students.

Mr. Gary Nine, Associated Superintendent, Apache Junction School District, addressed the State Board of Education noting that the 8th grade Math standards/tests are inappropriate. Mr. Nine stated that the school board requested a response from the State Board of Education by March 15, 2005, to a written appeal and a response has not been received. He asked the Board to do the right thing.

5. ADJOURN

Motion by Ms. Kramer to adjourn. Seconded by Dr. Nicodemus. *Motion passes.*

The State Board meeting was adjourned at 4:25PM.

*****NOTE: Additions to the agenda are bolded and underlined.**